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ABSTRACT

The results of a survey of participant attitudes are contained in this, the first of two reports evaluating the Georgia Right to Read Project. The survey was conducted for all schools participating in the project and included principals, reading teachers, and county project directors. The report concludes that the participants had positive attitudes toward the project. (A copy of the attitude survey form is appended.) (FL)

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Georgia Right to Read Program

External Evaluation Report:

Part I: Participants

Center for Educational Research
Georgia State University
October, 1978

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INTRODUCTION

The Right to Read project began in the early 1960's as an organized attempt to eradicate illiteracy in our country. The project was legislated, funded and developed at the Federal level. By the early 1970's a shift in focus had occured and the National Right to Read effort was dispersed to state agencies. Departments of Education in various states then chose to be responsible for, and began development of their own state projects.

The State of Georgia prior to 1973 had a state Right to Read Director, but a very general, umbrella-type program for reading. By 1973, formal project guidelines had been constructed and individual school systems were asked to participate on an optional basis in the Georgia Right to Read project. Each system that elected to participate was asked to designate a person to be the local Right to Read director, and subsequently asked those people to attend several workshop sessions in order to gain a full understanding of the state's project. These directors were then asked to set up Right to Read programs in individual schools within their local systems. A three-year plan for full implementation of the program was suggested. Upon attaining that goal, a school became "validated."

The validation process, as it is called, consists of workshop session participation by a county or system level supervisor, completion of a formal needs assessment in each individual school interested in the program, implementation of and/or adjustment to current reading programs to meet those assessed needs, and finally a request for a state team to visit the individual schools and apply the "Criteria of Excellence" to the developed reading program. If a school passes the criteria (each school has their own copy of the criteria and is aware of the standards to be met) it becomes a designated model Right to Read school and is open for

visitation by educators interested in a sound reading program. If validation is denied, the school can reapply for validation the following school year.

The Georgia Right to Read project has been in existence for several years and no formal evaluation has taken place. A formal evaluation is now underway and this report looks at a section of that evaluation procedure.

An attitude survey was conducted for all those individual schools participating in the Right to Read project. This included all principals and lead reading teachers (if there was one designated) as well as the local system Right to Read directors. Demographic information was collected for the same respondents. By assessing these variables relative to attitude toward the Right to Read program, those variables which best predict a positive attitude and/or negative attitude could be used to change or adjust the current program to fit the needs of the participating schools.

Procedures

The subjects for the study were drawn from elementary, junior high/middle school, and senior high principals, lead reading teachers, and county directors across the state of Georgia currently involved in the Georgia Right to Read project. Of 728 people contacted, 483 responded or 66.3% of the population. Four surveys were omitted because of incomplete information; 479 responses are included in the analysis here.

All persons were asked to respond to the same survey/questionnaire which was designated to elicit that person's opinion toward the Georgia Right to Read project.

Demographic data was also collected and included a job description (elementary, junior high/middle school, or senior high principal; lead reading teacher; or county director); number of years the respondent had been involved in the Right to Read project; whether or not the respondent had attended state conducted Right to Read workshop sessions; and the respondent's self-assessed progress toward the

project goal of validation and identification of the most important, least important, and most difficult items in the Criteria of Excellence. A questionnaire was also included containing 25 items. These items, all positively slanted, were designed to assess the respondent's attitude toward the Georgia Right to Read project and were based on the 16 items of the Criteria of Excellence. A Likert scale ranging from one to seven was used to record responses. Values assigned were: 1) strongly agree; 2) agree; 3) somewhat agree; 4) no opinion; 5) somewhat disagree; 6) disagree; 7) strongly disagree. Summary statistics were computed using SPSS subprograms, FREQUENCIES, BREAKDOWN, AND CROSSTABS.

Results

Of the 479 questionnaires returned, 39% (187) were from elementary principals, 5.8% (28) from junior high principals, 3.1% (15) from senior high principals, 35.7% (171) from lead reading teachers, 14.2% (68) from system level supervisors/coordinators, and 2.1% (10) did not identify themselves. The results, then largely reflect the views of 358 elementary principals and the lead reading teachers where the Right to Read Program has had most impact.

In an attempt to determine more clearly the job role, all respondents were asked to identify some specific aspects of their jobs. 75% were involved in ordering materials for the reading program; the testing of individual students for placement in the reading program was a part of the job for 41%. 76% of the jobs included responsibility for a school-wide testing program. 38% responded that they created resource units for classroom teachers to use while 40% said they did not. 60% of the respondents worked directly with students in their classrooms and 32% said they worked with students in a separate room. Corresponding to this, 33% responded that they worked with remedial readers, 43% did not. Another 34% worked with corrective readers, while 41% did not. Planning/conducting in-service was included by 75% of the respondents to be a part of their job, and 88% spent time conferencing with teachers. Record keeping was a part of job responsibility for 71% of those responding.

In terms of length of time in the program, 56% of the people reported that they had been involved with the Right to Read Program for at least three years. 39% reported that they had been in the Program for over three years. Only 4% of all respondents were from schools with validated programs, and 9% did not intend to validate.

The manner in which respondents spend their time on the job was of interest. If the positions of lead reading teachers and county directors are to be relevant, it is important to understand how these people do in fact use their time. All respondents were asked to divide a week's time into six categories in terms of percent of time spent involved in particular activities. Results are displayed below.

PERCENT OF TIME SPENT ON VARIOUS DUTIES BY POSITION*

	Working with Tables	Working with Students	Administrative Duties	Testing	Meetings	Other
Elementary Principal	15	33	30	4	9	21
Junior High/ Middle School Principal	14	28	23	2	10	38
Senior High Principal	19	36	33	5	4	13
Lead Reading Teacher	51	20	11	12	6	12
County Director	9	31	27	7	15	28

*The Categories of Time are not Mutually Exclusive

It should be noted, that the percent of time spent by any one job classification totaled more than 100%. Due to the nature of the categories, time spent in administrative duties, for example could also be classified as time spent working with teachers.

Respondents were asked to identify specific items in the Criteria of Excellence which they deemed to be the most difficult, most important and least important to

attain. Although there is no outstanding agreement on any item, the results are significant. With 16 items comprising the Criteria of Excellence, a chance score would be 6.25%. The figures reported here are well above that figure. 17% of the respondents selected as the most difficult item to attain item 6, which states: "In each content matter area, there is evidence of the application of reading skills in teaching subject matter." 24% of the respondents selected as the most important item to attain item 4 which states: "A continuous progress organization for the formal reading program is in operation." Item 10 which states: "The reading program encourages the use of the resources and services of the public library" was selected by 17% of the respondents as the least important item to attain. The remaining responses were scattered among all other items.

The main body of the survey form consisted of 25 questions about the Georgia Right to Read Program. The questions were based on the Criteria of Excellence and were stated such that an elicited response of a positive nature was interpreted to mean agreement with the Right to Read standards and intended practices. A seven point Likert scale was used with the following point values: 1) strongly agree; 2) agree; 3) somewhat agree; 4) no opinion; 5) somewhat disagree; 6) disagree; 7) strongly disagree.

Of the 479 responses received, 424 rated all 25 questions, 38 rated 24. The remaining 17 rated only from 4 to 23 questions. It can be stated, then, that the results generally reflect concerned people who took the time to complete the instrument. The mean score for all respondents was 44 which would indicate ratings of 1 (strongly agree) or 2 (agree) for most questions. Results are presented in the following table. (Full questions may be found in the complete instrument located in the Appendix).

PERCENT OF ATTITUDE RATING BY QUESTION

Question (Abbreviated Form)	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Somewhat Agree	4 No Opinion	5 Somewhat Disagree	6 Disagree	7 Strongly Disagree
1. Reading part of Language Arts	63	20	9	1	1	2	4
2. Formal needs assessment	50	25	13	5	4	1	1
3. Working folders for readers	57	26	10	3	2	1	1
4. Formalized sequence of skills	59	25	10	2	2	1	1
5. Variety of grouping patterns	65	23	8	2	1	1	0
6. Carry over to content area instruction	64	27	8	1	0	0	0
7. Classroom library	47	25	20	4	2	0	2
8. Daily free reading time	52	27	14	4	1	1	1
9. Media Specialist helps teachers	70	23	6	0	0	1	0
10. Support of Principal	95	3	1	0	0	0	0
11. LRT works with students	52	21	12	6	5	2	2
12. LRT as teacher resources	67	21	6	3	1	1	1
13. Time for other duties unaffected	39	23	14	8	7	3	6
14. Diagnostic testing procedure used	74	19	4	1	0	1	1
15. Reader placements monitored	72	23	4	0	0	1	0
16. Main purpose to help remedial readers	4	6	9	3	16	18	44
17. Good instructional materials available	86	11	1	0	0	1	1
18. Evaluation procedures clear for teacher	64	27	6	1	0	1	1

Percent of Attitude Rating By Question (continued)

Question (Abbreviated Form)	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Somewhat Agree	4 No Opinion	5 Somewhat Disagree	6 Disagree	7 Strongly Disagree
19. Teachers should attend in-service	62	25	10	1	1	1	0
20. Adequate consultants for LEA	62	25	7	5	0	1	0
21. Reading program should be developmental	80	15	4	0	1	0	0
22. Community and task force involvement	39	26	22	9	2	1	1
23. Variety of methods and techniques used	83	15	1	0	0	1	0
24. Positive atmosphere in classrooms	91	8	1	0	0	0	0
25. Unit teaching reinforces reading skills	56	26	10	5	2	1	0

Responses to each question were also analyzed in terms of the respondent's job role, assuming that educators in various positions relative to how closely they worked with the program would prove enlightening. The Chi square values for all questions were high and not significant, thereby indicating a better than chance response. A complete listing of responses to each question by each job category may be found in the printout attached. Only those that appear to have some special interest will be mentioned in the conclusions.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to state that a positive attitude toward the Georgia Right to Read Program exists due to the overall results of the attitude survey. Most respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the 25 statements on the survey form as shown by the mean rating of 1.775. Though the instrument has not been field tested or

validated previously each statement was directly related to items in the Criteria of Excellence, the main stay of the Georgia Right to Read Program.

Of special interest are responses to certain of these questions as they correspond to job categories. As a group, the senior high school principals displayed the least positive attitude toward the program. They consistently (21 out of 25 items) rated items lower than any other group. Most of these ratings were positive, but nevertheless lower than other groups of persons responding by job classification. This group of people, the senior high principals, may be good candidates for more intense program information.

The County Directors had the highest rating on 17 items of the survey; the lead reading teachers rated only two items highest as did the elementary principals. Junior high principals rated 4 items higher than any other category, and the senior high principals rated none highest. The large number of high ratings for the county directors may be due to that person's role with regard to the program. Most of these people have participated in several workshop sessions and it would be expected for them to have a more positive attitude because of a better understanding of the program. A stepped up orientation program for the other groups may enhance current understanding and in the end promote better reading programs and achievement across the state.

Only half of the respondents strongly agreed that a formal needs assessment should be conducted. Perhaps the concept is appropriate but the instrument may not be sufficient. Close scrutiny of how the assessment tool fits with expected outcome may be required.

On the question of classroom libraries, only 47% strongly agreed. This seems to have been influenced by the elementary school principals, perhaps because they feel their children have access to library books in the open concept media center. The item was rated highly by the other groups questioned.

The item of highest agreement (95%) was that of support of the principal. The feeling seems to be that program success is not possible without this person's support and understanding of the program. The second highest rating was that of classrooms maintaining a positive, warm atmosphere for learning. In many ways the principal can also effect this. The principals, then, seem to be an important group for program success.

Two items tied for the least positive attitudes (only 39% strong agreement). One was that the amount of time spent on the Right to Read program did not affect other teaching duties. This can be taken to mean that other duties were slighted as a result, or that in fact more time was spent on reading and thereby affected other duties to a degree, but not necessarily slighting them. Conducted properly, awareness of how best to teach reading is an ongoing teaching activity and in reality does not or need not impinge on other content areas, but rather broaden and support those other areas. The second item also with only 39% in strong agreement, was concerned with the community tasks force. This may reflect the impact of a relatively uneducated public. Most parents tend to see reading only in terms of achievement. An understanding of the true appreciation for reading as the goal of any program must be conveyed. Reading is more than skills, home atmosphere plays an important role. If community members were more aware of this aspect of the reading program, better and more willing participation might occur thereby enhancing the school personnel's attitude toward community involvement.

Another aspect of the survey was the identification of how respondents spend their working day. Of particular interest was the information that lead reading teachers reported that they spent 51% of their time working with teachers. This makes a strong statement for support of the fact that the Right to Read program seems not to be another program aimed at remedial readers, but aimed at the total school reading program. Lead reading teachers are working with other teachers as on site

resource people to enhance knowledge of reading and hopefully instruct classroom teachers how to become better teachers of reading. This trend should be encouraged to continue in order to best carry out the goals of the Georgia Right to Read program.

Surprisingly, only 9% of the county director's time reportedly is spent working with teachers while 31% of their time is spent working with students. This 31% is equitable with time spent in similar activities by all three groups of principals. The term "working" was not defined relative to teaching or disciplining students. It is assumed, but not confirmed, that much of the principals' time spent working with children may refer to discipline. The county director's role in working with students may reflect introductions of new materials and/or demonstration lessons, both of which should be encouraged.

The lead reading teachers reported spending the most time (12%) testing children. This is to be expected as they fulfill their role of monitoring children's reading placements. The county directors spent most time, 15%, in meetings. Correspondingly, the lead reading teachers reported only 6%, a positive statement that their services are indeed being used in the schools and they are not caught up in endless meetings.

All of this seems to imply that those schools involved in the Right to Read program do understand the program goals. The lead reading teachers are apparently working with teachers as well as students as the program is designed. Support of the program by principals was importantly rated and this source of program support may be critical. In an effort to get at the relative value of each item in the Criteria of Excellence, respondents were asked to select those items which they felt were most important, least important, and most difficult to attain. The most important item was identified as a continuous progress program (item number 4). This is an indication that the respondents do take the program seriously by identifying one of the most far-reaching items in the Criteria. It is this item which forms the

foundation for the school's entire reading program. Item 6 refers to the application of reading skills to other content matter areas and was identified as the most difficult item to attain. If one inspects any reading program, one purpose should be apparent and that is the use of reading as a learning tool, not a subject unto itself. By identifying items 4 and 6 as most important and most difficult respectively, two items of major significance relative to a solid reading program have been identified. Special help in the form of in-service and/or special consultant help for these areas would no doubt benefit the state Right to Read Program greatly, and thereby affect many of the state's children.

The item of least importance (item number 10) refers to use of the public libraries. The item itself is a worthy one and important as the schools attempt to create readers who do in fact read, as evidenced by use of public library facilities. However, many communities in the state of Georgia are small and have limited resources and services, and the school system itself may have more to offer. This may justify its selection as the item of least importance.

One last point of interest lies in the reported progress of each respondent with regard to the Georgia Right to Read Program. After 3 years of participation each school is expected to apply for validation. Although 39% reported they had been in the program for over three years, only 4% of the respondents were from validated schools, and 9% said they did not intend to become validated. One should question such a discrepancy. One possible answer is that there is no material reward or support for having a validated program. The reward of having a model reading program for others to emulate should be sufficient, but more often the search for monetary support becomes paramount. Perhaps the state's educators need to be more demanding of good quality programs, and not search out only those programs which fund themselves. These educators should be made aware that the Georgia Right to Read program is in fact the state reading program and not an "extra" program to be accepted or rejected at will. The state must be responsible for this.

A closer look at reasons why schools have elected nonparticipation, to be presented in a subsequent report, may be enlightening with regard to the low number of schools proceeding to the validation level of the Right to Read Program.

APPENDIX

PART I Descriptive Information

Please complete the information on pages 1 and 2 by responding to all six (6) items.

(1) Job description

☐1 Principal (elementary)

☐2 Principal (middle school/jr. high)

☐3 Principal (high school)

☐4 Lead Reading Teacher

☐5 County (System Level) Supervisor/Coordinator

(2) Duties with regard to R2R program (check any and all that apply directly to your role within the program)

yes	no	
☐1	☐2	order reading materials
☐1	☐2	test individual students for placement in the reading program
☐1	☐2	responsible, totally or in part, for group and/or school-wide testing program
☐1	☐2	create resource units for teachers to use
☐1	☐2	work with students and/or teachers within their own classrooms
☐1	☐2	work with students in a separate room area away from the regular classroom
☐1	☐2	work with students in need of remedial reading instruction
☐1	☐2	work with students in need of correctional reading instruction
☐1	☐2	plan and/or conduct teacher in-service
☐1	☐2	hold conferences with individual teachers about students and/or various aspects of teaching reading
☐1	☐2	administrative record keeping duties

(3) Judge how much time is spent each week doing the following tasks. Figure a percent for each one based on a total week's time of 100%.

__ __% working with students

__ __% working with teachers

__ __% administrative duties (record keeping, ordering materials, etc.)

__ __% testing

__ __% meetings related to the reading program

__ __% other, please specify

100%

(4) Number of years you have been involved with the R2R program:

- ☐1 1 year
- ☐2 2 years
- ☐3 3 years
- ☐4 4 years
- ☐5 5 years
- ☐6 6 years
- ☐7 over 7 years

(5) If you participated in the workshop study group sessions conducted by the State Department, check which session you attended. (The Roman numerals refer to the Developmental Stages corresponding with each set of sessions.)

- ☐1 I (sessions held 1973-74)
- ☐2 II (sessions held 1974-75)
- ☐3 III (sessions held 1975-76)
- ☐4 IV (sessions held 1976-77)
- ☐5 V (sessions being held 1977-78)
- ☐6 I have not participated in the workshop study groups.

(6) Progress in the R2R program:

- ☐1 beginning (as of September 1977)
- ☐2 making slow progress
- ☐3 making solid progress
- ☐4 applying/have applied for validation this Spring (March-May 1978)
- ☐5 requested validation and was not accepted
- ☐6 currently validated
- ☐7 in program, but do not intend to request validation
- ☐8 other, please specify _____

PART II Opinionaire

The next three (3) items on this page are related specifically to the Georgia Right To Read Criteria of Excellence. Please refer to the Criteria of Excellence items by objective number and letter for questions 7, 8, & 9.

(7) The most difficult item in the criteria of excellence to plan for and meet is/was: (give item number and letter)

☐ ☐

Explain briefly the reason for your response:

_____

_____

_____

(8) The most important item in the criteria is: (give item number and letter)

☐ ☐

Briefly explain reason for your response:

_____

_____

_____

(9) The least important item in the criteria is: (give item number and letter)

☐ ☐

Briefly explain the reason for your response:

_____

_____

_____

PART III Questionaire

The final part of the survey consists of twenty-five (25) statements about reading. Relate each statement to the Georgia Right To Read program and consider whether it should be a part of the program, not whether it is now.

Each statement is to be rated using the following scale:

SA ☐1 ..... ☐2 ..... ☐3 ..... ☐4 ..... ☐5 ..... ☐6 ..... ☐7 SD
No Op

SA means Strongly Agree
No Op means No Opinion
SD means Strongly Disagree

You may respond at any number on the scale using the above description as reference points.

(1) The reading program/instruction should be part of the larger language arts program and not separate from it.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(2) A formal need assessment should be conducted.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(3) Working folders (in addition to cumulative/permanent records folders) should be a part of each student's reading program.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(4) A formalized sequence of skills should be used by teachers for reading instruction.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(5) Students should be placed in a variety of groups at different times depending on general ability, interest, and special instructional needs.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(6) Content area instruction should include the carry-over of previously taught reading skills and/or the teaching of the specialized reading skills related to a particular content area.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(7) Each classroom should have its own library for student use.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(8) The students and teachers should have a regularly scheduled, daily free reading time.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

SA ☐1 ..... ☐2 ..... ☐3 ..... ☐4 No Op ..... ☐5 ..... ☐6 ..... ☐7 SD

scale

(9) The media specialist should work with teachers to provide content area materials at a variety of reading levels.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(10) The principal should actively support the reading program.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(11) The LRT should work with individuals and small groups of students.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(12) The LRT should work as a resource person for and with the classroom teachers.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(13) Time spent on other teaching duties should not be affected by the emphasis on the reading program.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(14) A diagnostic/testing procedure (formal or informal) should be part of the reading program.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(15) Placement of students in reading groups based on ability should be monitored frequently for accuracy of placement.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(16) The main purpose of the reading program should be to help the remedial readers.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(17) Good instructional materials for teaching reading should be available.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(18) How as well as what to evaluate in reading instruction should be clearly specified for teachers.

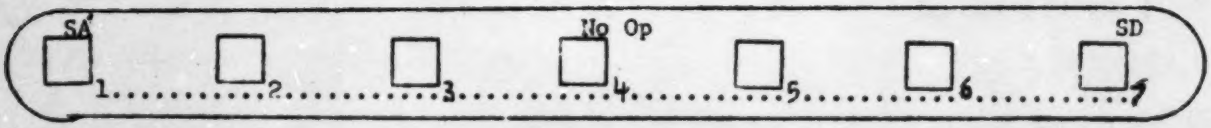
☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(19) The teachers should attend in-service meetings related to reading instruction and/or the reading program.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(20) The LEA should provide adequate consultants/supervisory services in the area of reading.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7



(21) The reading program should be developmental in nature such that all children benefit from it.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(22) The community via the Task Force, should be involved in the reading program.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(23) Reading should be taught using a variety of methods and techniques.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(24) Classrooms should have a positive atmosphere to suggest it is a good place for learning.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

(25) Unit teaching should help support the reading program by reinforcing skills already learned.

☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7

Please return the completed form by March 24, 1978 to:

Attn: Dr. John H. Neel
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Atlanta, Georgia 30303